

<http://www.gallup.com/poll/147941/Republicans-Unified-Democrats-Abortion.aspx>

June 6, 2011

Republicans More Unified Than Democrats on Abortion

Pro-choice view among Democrats largely linked to education and income

by Lydia Saad

PRINCETON, NJ -- As the 2012 Republican presidential contenders begin to hone their campaign messages and court social-issues voters, a Gallup analysis reveals the striking homogeneity of rank-and-file Republicans on abortion. Roughly two-thirds of Republicans across most major gender, age, educational, and income lines describe themselves as "pro-life," while about a quarter call themselves "pro-choice."

Republicans' Views on Abortion -- by Demographic, Regional Subgroups

With respect to the abortion issue, would you consider yourself to be pro-choice or pro-life?

	“Pro-choice”	“Pro-life”	Number of interviews
	%	%	
All Republicans	27	68	1,270
Men	27	68	676
Women	26	68	594
18 to 34 years	21	73	175
35 to 54 years	34	64	391
55 and older	24	69	687
High school or less	24	66	369
Some college	30	68	364
College graduate	26	71	280
Post graduate	27	68	256
Less than \$30,000	25	69	219
\$30,000-\$74,999	28	67	475
\$75,000 and over	31	67	453
East	38	58	242
Midwest	21	76	293
South	22	71	443
West	31	62	292

Combined data from 2008-2011

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Republicans' abortion views show slightly greater variability by region of the country. Those living in the East and West are less unified around the pro-life label than those in the South or Midwest, although even on the coasts, it is the majority view.

These findings are based on an aggregation of Gallup's annual Values and Beliefs surveys from 2008 through 2011, encompassing 1,270 Republicans.

Class Differences in Democrats' Abortion Views

Republicans' broad unity on abortion contrasts with Democrats' more variable support for the pro-choice label. According to interviews with 1,362 Democrats since 2008 as part of Gallup's Values and Beliefs surveys, differences in Democrats' views on the issue are particularly seen along socio-economic lines.

Whereas Democrats with a high school education or less tilt pro-life by 47% to 43%, the pro-choice view rises to 68% among those with at least some college education and to 85% among those with postgraduate education. Similarly, adherence to the pro-choice label among Democrats rises from 43% in the lowest income group to 79% in the highest one.

Like Republicans' abortion views, Democrats' views also vary somewhat by region, with Democrats in the West being the most unified around the pro-choice position, and those in the South, the least. Also similar to Republicans, Democrats exhibit no gender gap on abortion. There is a modest generational gap, with Democrats 55 and older being slightly less likely than younger Democrats to describe themselves as pro-choice.

Black Democrats are slightly less likely than white Democrats to be pro-choice, although the majority of both groups take the pro-abortion-rights position. The 2008-2011 Gallup dataset contains too few black Republicans for a comparable look at racial views on abortion within that party.

Democrats' Views on Abortion -- by Demographic, Regional Subgroups

With respect to the abortion issue, would you consider yourself to be pro-choice or pro-life?

	"Pro-choice"	"Pro-life"	Number of interviews
	%	%	
All Democrats	62	32	1,362
Men	61	35	578
Women	63	30	784
Non-Hispanic white	67	29	935
Non-Hispanic black	52	39	209
18 to 34 years	65	28	201
35 to 54 years	67	28	426
55 and older	55	38	725
High school or less	43	47	422
Some college	68	27	358
College graduate	67	28	216
Post graduate	85	13	364
Less than \$30,000	43	48	346
\$30,000-\$74,999	66	29	528
\$75,000 and over	79	19	385
East	65	31	341
Midwest	61	33	295
South	54	39	421
West	71	22	305

Combined data from 2008-2011

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Religion a Factor in Abortion Views in Both Parties

Abortion views are closely intertwined with religion, and that is seen within both parties just as it is among the public at large. The percentage of Republicans who are pro-life is 38 points higher among those who seldom or never attend church or another place of worship compared

with those who attend weekly, 46% vs. 84%. A nearly identical gap in pro-choice support is seen among Democrats between non-churchgoers and regular attendees, 77% vs. 40%.

Partisans' Views on Abortion -- by Attendance at Church/Synagogue

With respect to the abortion issue, would you consider yourself to be pro-choice or pro-life?

	"Pro-choice"	"Pro-life"	Number of interviews
	%	%	
REPUBLICANS			
Attend weekly	11	84	552
Attend nearly weekly	29	66	340
Seldom/Never attend	47	46	370
DEMOCRATS			
Attend weekly	40	48	385
Attend nearly weekly	60	36	349
Seldom/Never attend	77	19	617

Combined data from 2008-2011

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Bottom Line

Consistent with the solid "pro-life" stance of rank-and-file Republicans, the emerging Republican presidential field is dominated by anti-abortion candidates and potential candidates, with all of the current top-tier names (at 5% or better in Gallup polling) embracing the pro-life label. This includes Mitt Romney, Sarah Palin, Ron Paul, Newt Gingrich, Herman Cain, Tim Pawlenty, and Michele Bachmann. The primary differences among them on the issue generally have to do with whether they oppose all abortions or would make an exception for rape and incest.

Such unity would normally suggest that the Republican nomination will be decided on something other than abortion. That would seem particularly true this year with the economy and federal budget deficit eclipsing other concerns in voters' minds. However, Romney's candidacy could change that if his competitors decide to make his past positions in support of abortion rights an issue. The Gallup analysis of Republicans' abortion views suggests that such

criticism of Romney could be broadly communicated to GOP voters in a way that might not work for abortion messaging in the Democratic Party. It would matter little if Romney's GOP opponents make their case at a \$1,000-a-plate dinner in Ohio, a down-home picnic in New Hampshire, or to college Republicans -- the audience would likely be sympathetic to a pro-life message. Whether Republicans would care enough to prioritize questions about Romney's sincerity on abortion over other issues remains a different matter.

Survey Methods

Results are based on telephone interviews conducted as part of four separate Gallup polls conducted between 2008 and 2011, with a random sample of 4,079 national adults, aged 18 and older. Survey dates for the four polls are May 5-8, 2011; May 3-6, 2010; May 7-10, 2009; and May 8-11, 2008.

For results based on the total sample of 1,270 Republicans, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is ± 3 percentage points. For results based on the total sample of 1,362 Democrats, one can say with 95% confidence that the maximum margin of sampling error is ± 3 percentage points.

Interviews across the four surveys were conducted with respondents on both land-line telephones and cellular phones, although the precise methods and minimum quotas used for each survey differ according to changes over time in cell-phone use and penetration. The 2011 survey included interviews conducted in Spanish for respondents who are primarily Spanish-speaking.

Samples are weighted by gender, age, race, Hispanic ethnicity, education, region, adults in the household, and phone status. Demographic weighting targets for each survey are based on the most recent Current Population Survey figures for the aged 18 and older non-institutionalized population living in U.S. telephone households. All reported margins of sampling error include the computed design effects for weighting and sample design.

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.